

May 24, 2022

RE: ¾ FAS Disability for Fire Protection Specialists (S.1889-C/A.4084-B)

Dear Legislator:

As a taxpayer, a constituent and a member of the New York State Public Employees Federation, I urge you to pass legislation to provide a needed benefit to the brave women and men who serve the public as Fire Protection Specialists (S.1889-C by Sen. Skoufis/A.4084-B by Asm. Abbate).

This bill would create an accidental disability benefit for the fire protection specialist series, provided that the injured individual is physically or mentally incapacitated as a natural and proximate result of an injury sustained while actually employed as a fire protection specialist.

Fire Protection Specialists conduct inspections, coordinate and conduct training programs and provide consultation and expert technical assistance in a variety of fire and emergency services related areas, respond to emergency incidents as directed, providing technical assistance to local fire officials as requested and conduct fire/arson investigations. Studies show that first responders and firefighters have elevated concentrations of certain toxic compounds produced from burning the chemicals contained in flame-retardant materials and are generally more exposed to hazardous chemicals (and their byproducts) compared to the general public. Fire protection specialists are often exposed to the very same toxins as firefighters and thus similarly have a heightened risk of developing debilitating health conditions. These essential workers put their lives on the line serving as front line workers during the height of the pandemic and are deployed to wherever the need arises. Now, it is time for the state to provide the respect and benefit that these dedicated women and men deserve.

Please ensure that S.1889-C/A.4084-B passes during this legislative session.

Sincerely,